



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased in February to 4.5 percent from January's rate of 4.3 percent, as shown in Seaport Table 1. In February 2001, the rate was 4.4 percent. Total employment increased by 120 in February 2002. In spite of this increase, the real concern is the employment decrease from last year. Compared to February 2000, total employment has decreased by 400.

In February, the Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 140 jobs from January 2002, but decreased by 720 jobs from February 2001. Slight employment increases occurred only in *Services* and *Government*. From February 2001, employment decreases were recorded in every industry. In view of the fact that one or two industries cannot be pinpointed as the cause of this year-over-year decrease, the numbers suggest a market decrease, most likely in response to employment diminishing in neighboring communities.

SPECIAL TOPIC

Covered Employers

Covered employers include all employers covered by Idaho's Unemployment Insurance law. This law covers approximately 92 percent of employers in Idaho. As shown in Seaport Table 2, the number of employers started to decrease in all five North Central Idaho counties between 1996 and 1997, and continued through 2001. Even though

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	Feb 2002*	Jan 2002	Feb 2001	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,330	34,130	34,700	0.6	-1.1
Unemployment	1,560	1,480	1,530	5.4	2.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.5	4.3	4.4	0.2	-0.1
Total Employment	32,770	32,650	33,170	-5.4	-1.2
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,470	34,230	34,860	0.7	-1.1
Unemployment	1,980	1,880	2,000	5.3	-1.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.7	5.5	5.7	0.2	0.0
Total Employment	32,490	32,350	32,860	0.4	-1.1
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	24,840	24,700	25,560	0.6	-2.8
Goods-Producing Industries	4,830	4,850	5,050	-0.4	-4.4
Mining & Construction	1,090	1,100	1,200	-0.9	-9.2
Manufacturing	3,740	3,750	3,850	-0.3	-2.9
Food Processing	70	70	100	0.0	-30.0
Lumber & Wood Products	690	700	730	-1.4	-5.5
Paper Products	1,690	1,680	1,710	0.6	-1.2
All Other Manufacturing	1,290	1,300	1,310	-0.8	-1.5
Service-Producing Industries	20,010	19,850	20,510	0.8	-2.4
Transportation	1,380	1,400	1,400	-1.4	-1.4
Communications & Utilities	280	280	290	0.0	-3.4
Wholesale Trade	900	900	940	0.0	-4.3
Retail Trade	4,590	4,690	4,920	-2.1	-6.7
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,380	1,380	1,400	0.0	-1.4
Services	6,360	6,340	6,500	0.3	-2.2
Government Administration	2,720	2,660	2,530	2.3	7.5
Government Education	2,400	2,200	2,530	9.1	-5.1
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

total decreases have been recorded, new employers are emerging. A common trend throughout North Central Idaho is that most new employers are small with less than 10 employees. The number of large employers, those with 100 or more employees, has decreased in the past five years.

Seaport Table 2: Covered Employers 1990-present

County	Covered Employers											
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	* 2001
Clearwater	306	344	342	347	347	335	341	341	335	339	339	327
Idaho	410	472	486	491	511	522	544	562	561	553	545	538
Latah	772	859	870	913	944	980	1,006	1,022	1,024	1,014	992	982
Lewis	140	169	164	168	176	183	175	179	173	168	168	163
Nez Perce	1,112	1,201	1,261	1,289	1,332	1,350	1,365	1,371	1,354	1,341	1,323	1,332

* Estimate based on the monthly average of the first 3 quarters of 2001

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- Last year, river guides and outfitters in Clearwater County hosted people from as far away as England, Ireland, and even Japan, all looking to hook that "big one," according to a recent report. When guides ask the visitors why they come, they report several different responses. "They're from the big cities. They like the backcountry and the friendly people. They miss that. The people from Ireland keep calling and asking, 'How's the fishing? We're coming back. We're coming back!'" According to most guides, customers do more than just eat, sleep, and fish; they also shop and sometimes bring families along, too.

Idaho & Lewis Counties

- Primeland Cooperatives, formerly Union Warehouse and Supply Company, added a couple of familiar faces to their Grangeville branch office. Colin Crea, who worked for the company out of Ferdinand and Cottonwood, has made the transition to the Grangeville office. Crea will help with sales and consulting in the agronomy division. Along with Crea, Jug Thomason, a longtime employee of the former Union Warehouse, has also rejoined the staff part-time. Thomason will help with dispatch and some field work. He retired in January 2001 after more than 13 years with the company, and he is a welcome addition again to the staff.

Latah County

- The University of Idaho (UI) will reorganize three colleges and consolidate various programs and departments in response to state funding holdbacks and reduced funding for higher education. Consolidation of programs and departments is expected to reduce UI's budgetary shortfall and cut redundant positions. Although moves are complex from one school to another, the objective of these moves is to establish colleges of similar size at UI. The plan for the next school year also establishes a formal partnership between the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the College of Natural Resources. The partnership should help consolidate and strengthen administrative support in research, extension, fiscal operations, international programs, distance education, and educational technology. UI also will establish three coordinating committees for life sciences, teacher education, and social sciences. Committee members will review all programming and similar areas to recom-

mend where duplication can be removed and where existing programs can be strengthened. All outreach activities—continuing education, extension and UI centers statewide—will be combined under the direction of Vice President for Outreach.

- Pullman Memorial Hospital (PMH) in Pullman and Gritman Medical Center in Moscow are preparing to become one-stop shopping places for the health care needs of Palouse residents. Both hospitals have launched multi-million dollar expansions, betting that technology and new procedures will set them up for individual success. The two hospitals will offer similar state-of-the-art services after construction is complete. Both Gritman and PMH are recruiting doctors who can perform specialized surgeries that, with high-technology diagnostic equipment, have become the mainstays for modern hospitals. Gritman's expansion will concentrate on adding space for elective outpatient surgeries. Currently, the hospital must put patients on a waiting list. PMH's expansion will provide a combination of space for outpatient surgery and traditional hospital functions. Officials estimate the hospital, office buildings, and therapy clinics will occupy nine acres on Bishop Boulevard.

Nez Perce County

- Construction of a new Safeway supermarket in Lewiston's Nez Perce Plaza will begin in April. When Home Depot opened February 7, Nez Perce Plaza officials had predicted Safeway construction would start by early March. A building permit for the foundation and exterior walls was issued in October. The parking lot has been built and some materials are on site. Earlier predictions were that construction would take about seven months. A lease for a Safeway fuel station is being treated as a separate project, and construction plans haven't been prepared for submission to the city yet. Construction design documents also are being completed for an AmericanWest bank that will be on one of the pads adjacent to Thain Grade. A manager has been hired, and the bank is expected to open this fall.

Doug Tweedy, Regional Labor Economist
1158 Idaho Street, Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-5000 ext. 307
E-mail: dtweedy@labor.state.id.us